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ABSTRACT

Taken from Alaskan oral tradition, the five "how" stories are written in simple English prose. "The Four Qayaqs" explains why the porcupine has no fat on his stomach and the beaver has none on his back. "Ptarmigan and the Sandhill Crane" tells how the two very different birds come to look alike. In "Why the Dall Sheep Lives in the Mountains", Qayaq's wiggling toes scare a man into the mountains where he becomes a sheep. "Why the Caribou Has Long Legs" relates how the Qayaq uses a stick to beat the short hind legs of his caribou wife to make her legs grow. "How Three Boys Became Animals" is the story of three brothers left alone who turn into a wolf, a fox, and a raven so they can go outside. The large print book has illustrations on each page. (SB)

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MORE HOW STORIES from ALASKA

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More How Stories

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From Stories told by
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As a joint project with the
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Illustrated by
J. Leslie Boffa

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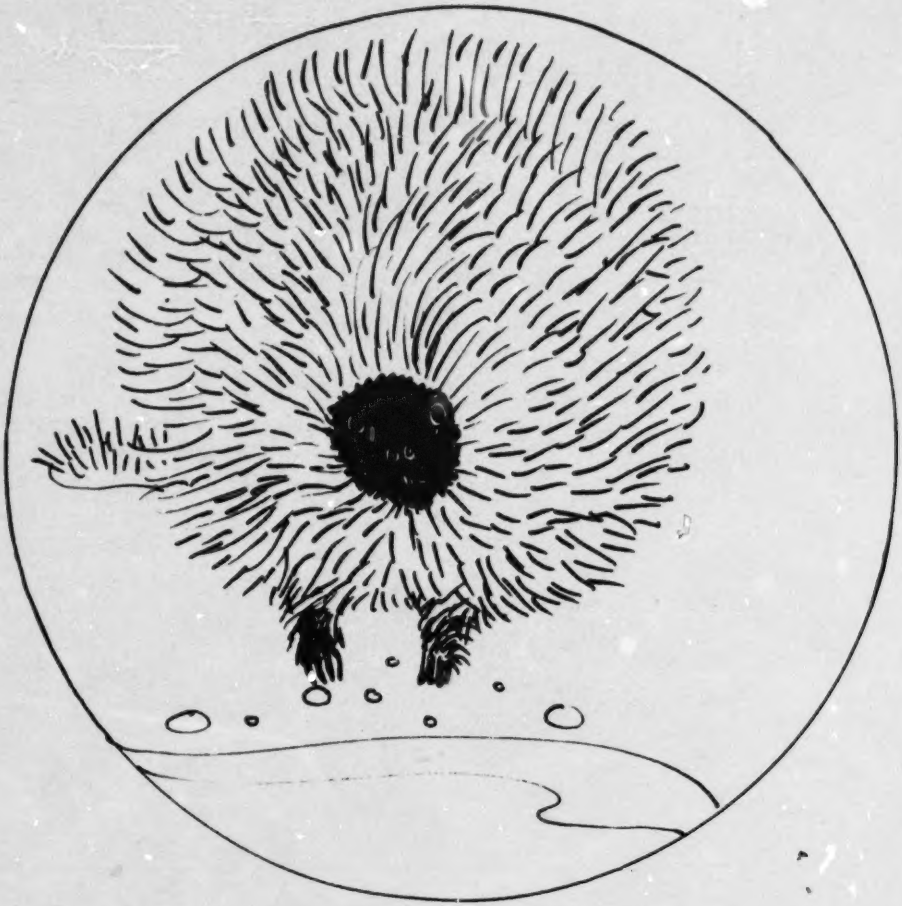
"Help me. Help me.
You, the qayaq over there.
You, the qayaq over there.
Take me across the river."

1



Porcupine stood by the river bank.
He wanted to cross the river.
He saw a qayaq coming.
So he started to sing to it.

2

The first qayaq was a mink.
He answered the porcupine.
He said, "The next person with the
big qayaq will take you across."

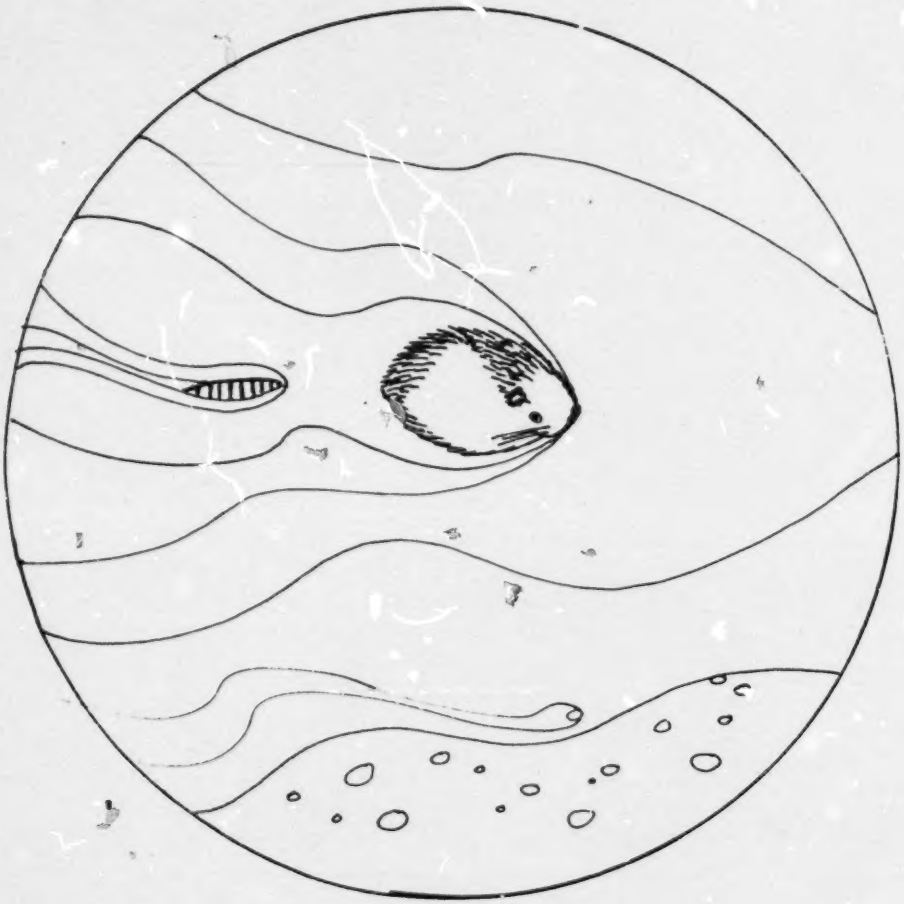
3

Porcupine waited.

A bigger qayaq came.

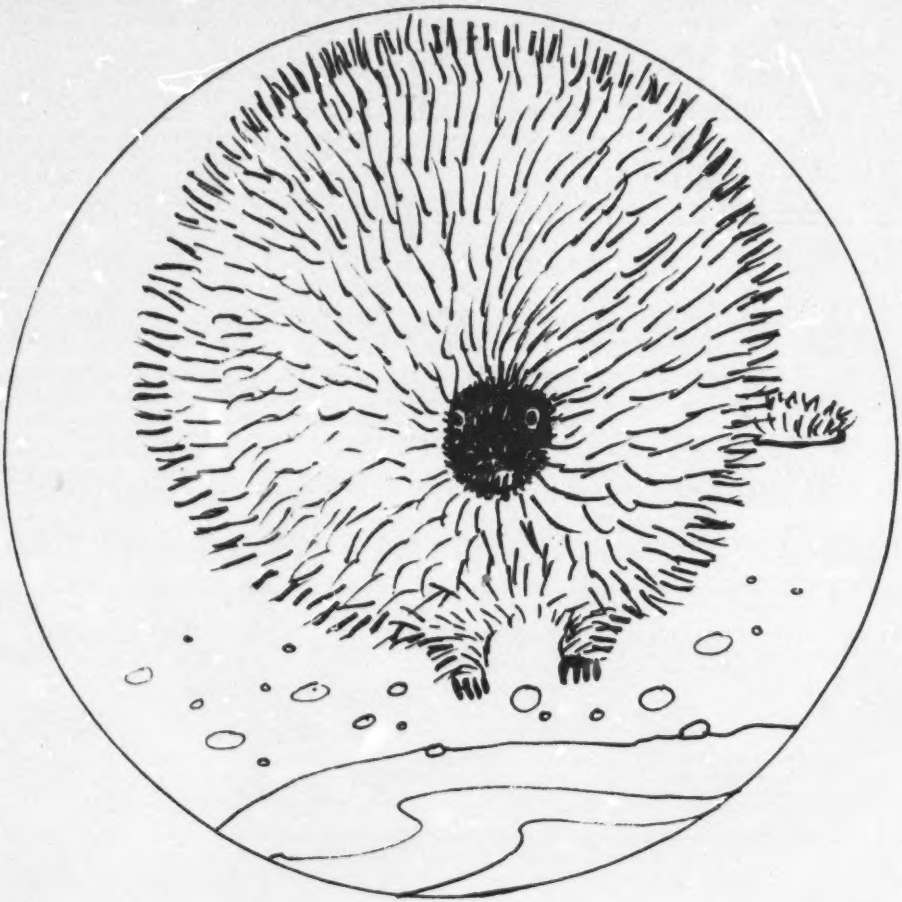
Porcupine called out again.

He called to the next qayaq.



"Help me. Help me.
You, the qayaq over there.
You, the qayaq over there.
Take me across the river."

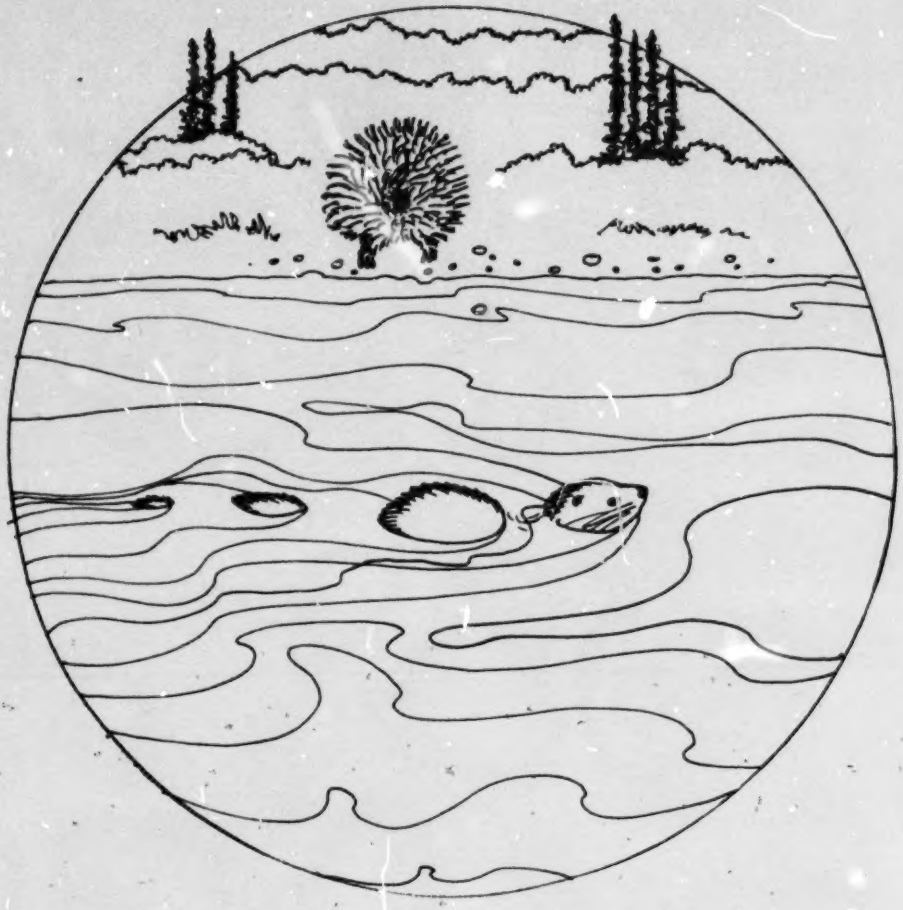
The second qayaq was a muskrat.
He answered the porcupine.
He said, "The next person with the
big qayaq will take you across."



Porcupine waited again.
A bigger qayaq came.
Porcupine called out again.
He called to the next qayaq.

7

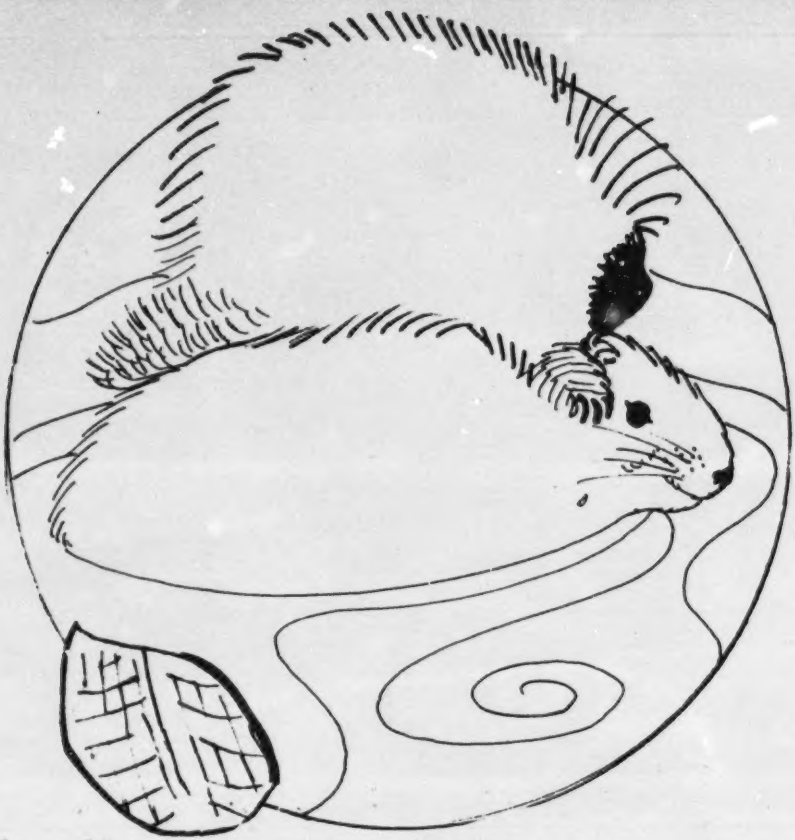
"Help me. Help me.
You, the qayaq over there.
You, the qayaq over there.
Take me across the river."



The third qayaq was an otter.
He answered the porcupine.
He said, "The next person with the
big qayaq will take you across."

9

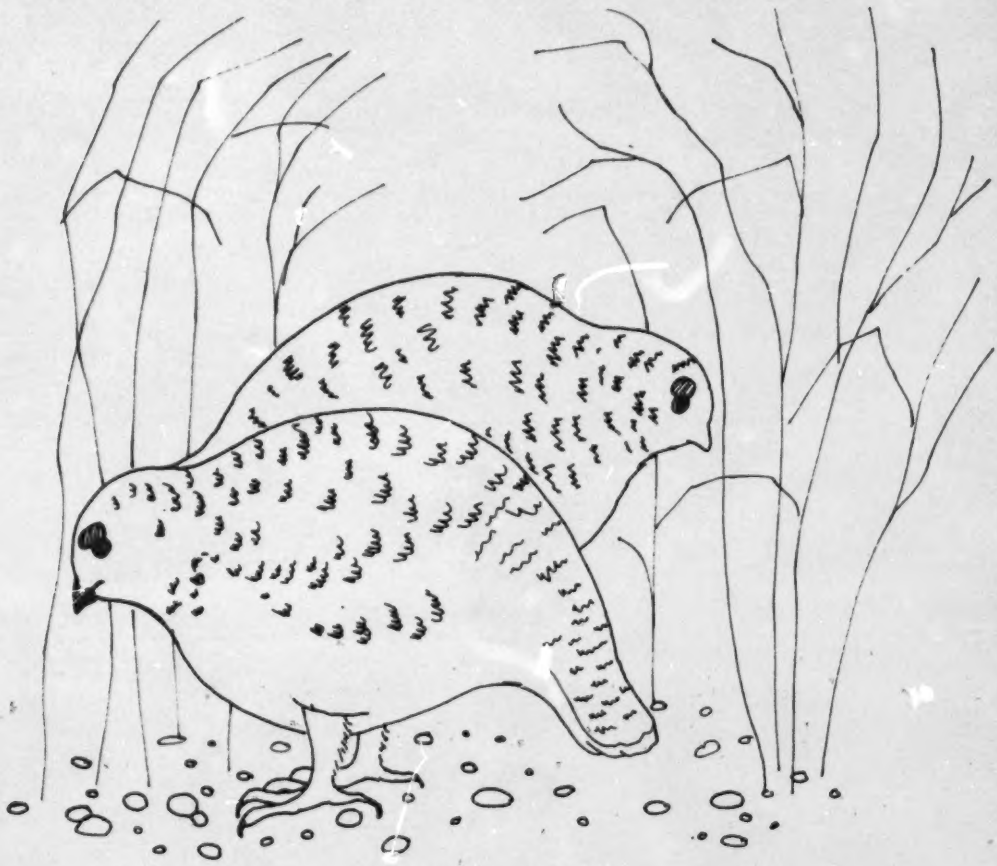
Porcupine waited again.
A very big qayaq came.
Porcupine sang his song.
The biggest qayaq took him
across the river.



The fourth qayaq was a beaver.
He was the biggest qayaq.
He took porcupine across the river.
But to this day, the beaver has no
fat on his back where porcupine sat.
Porcupine got across the river.
But to this day, he has no fat on his
stomach where he touched beaver's back.

11

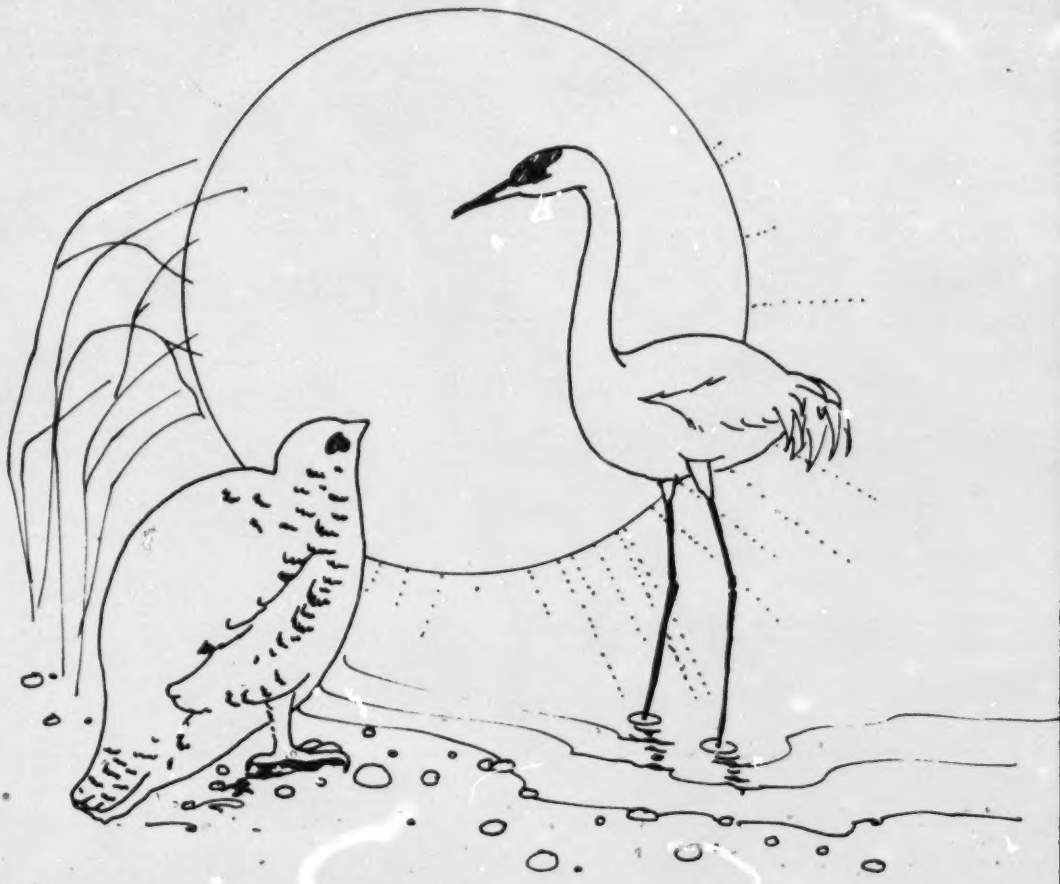
PTARMIGAN AND THE SANDHILL CRANE



Ptarmigan and her husband were eating.
They were eating willows by the sand bar.
Ptarmigan's husband got caught in a snare.
Ptarmigan began to cry.

A sandhill crane across the river heard
the crying.
He said, "Have me for a husband.
I have a big forehead. I have a long beak.
I have a long neck. I have a long neck."

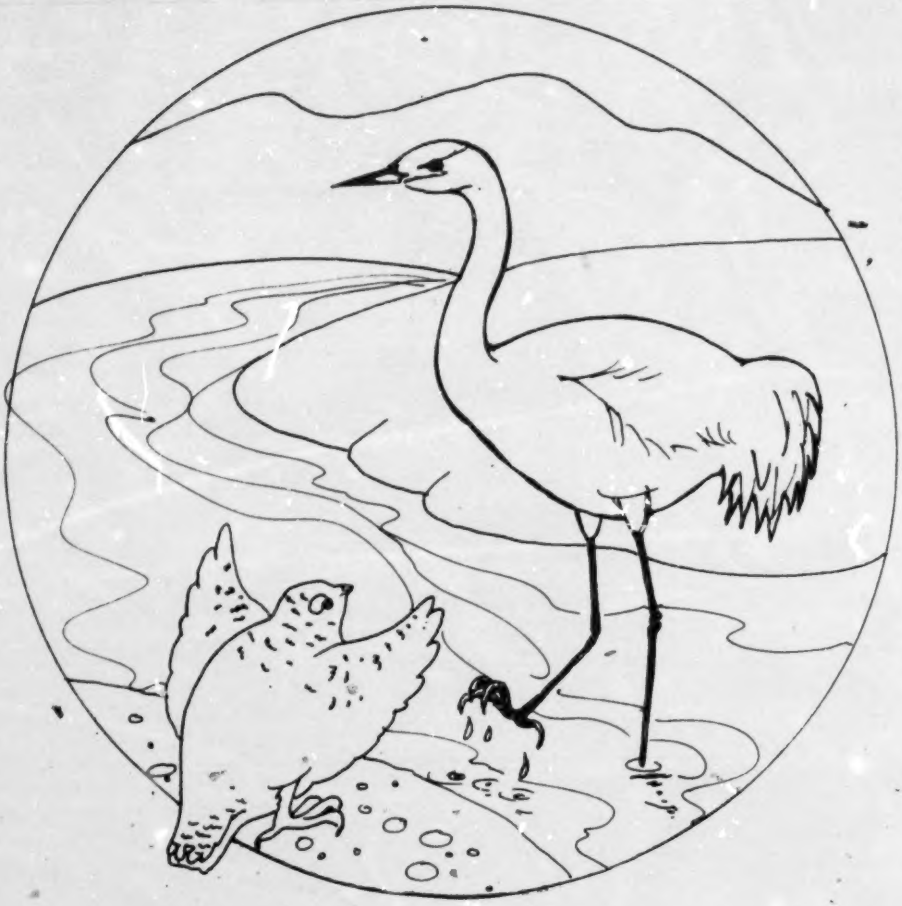
13



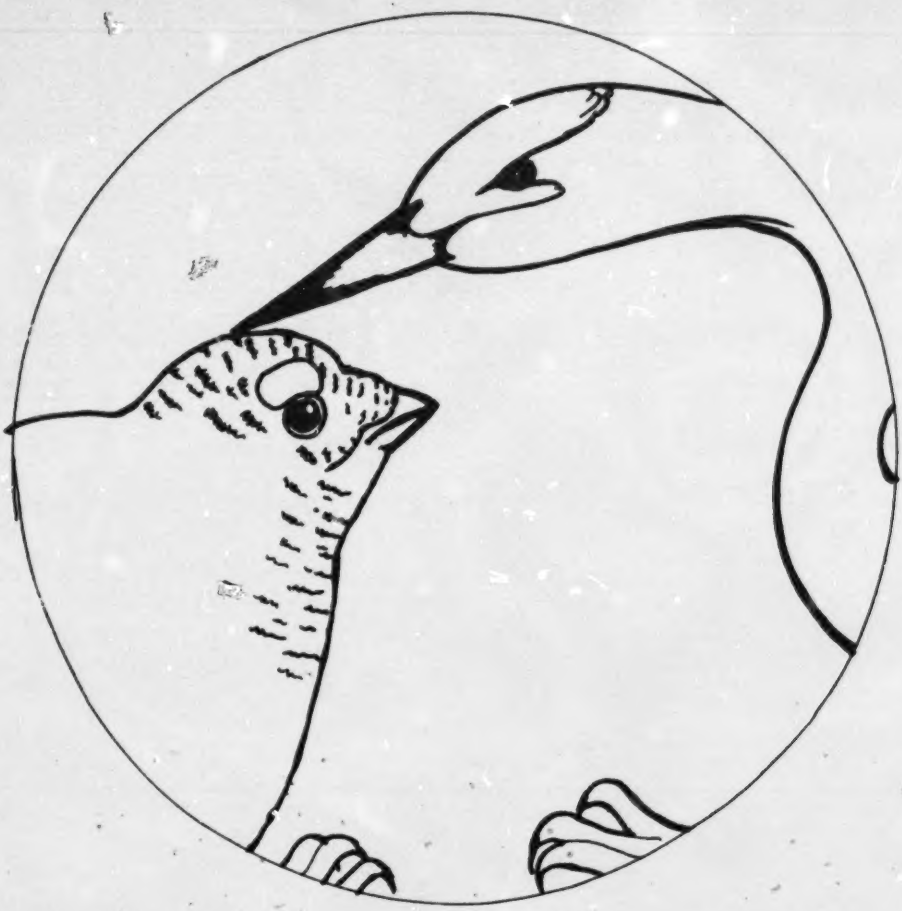
Ptarmigan answered the sandhill crane.
"Who would want you for a husband?
You have a big forehead. You have a long beak.
You have a long neck. You have a long neck."
14

The sandhill crane called back again.
He said, "Why are you crying then?
What is that under the willow roots?
He got caught in the snaring fence!"

15



Ptarmigan called back to the sandhill crane.
She said,"I will make you a fancy hood.
I will trim it with wolverine strips.
I will make it fancy."



That is why the ptarmigan and the sandhill crane are alike.

They have red eyebrows.

They have feet that are alike.

And they have the same sinews.

17

WHY THE DALL SHEEP LIVES IN THE MOUNTAINS

A man named Qayaq was camping.
He had a big fire.
His mukluks were off.
His feet were bare.

A man came to camp with him.
He looked at Qayaq.
He looked at Qayaq's toe.
The toe kept moving.
It couldn't stay still.

19

The man said, "Why does your
toe keep moving?"
Qayaq answered, "My toe wants
to eat you."
The man was afraid.
He ran away.
He called back, "Are you holding it?"

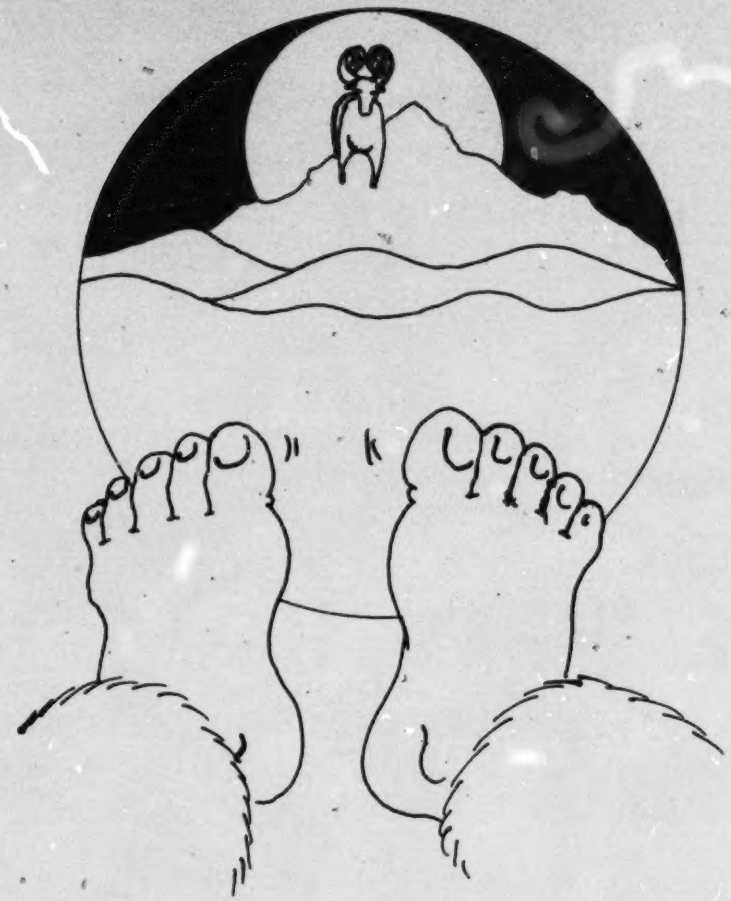
"Yes," called Qayaq.

"I'm holding it."

From farther away, "Are you holding it?"

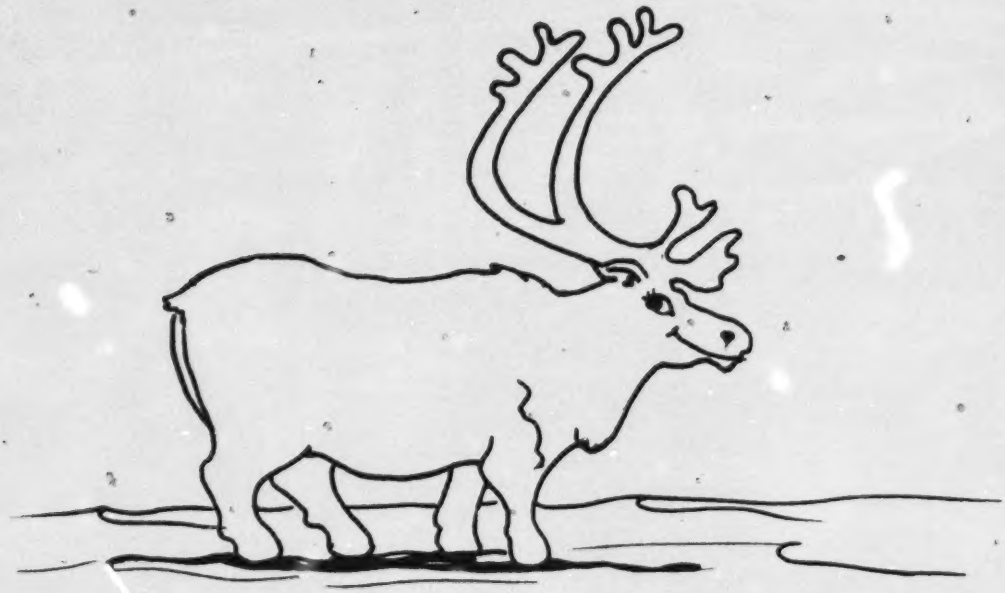
"Yes, I'm holding it," answered Qayaq.

From far away in the mountains,
"Are you holding it?"
"Yes," came the answer.
I am still holding it."

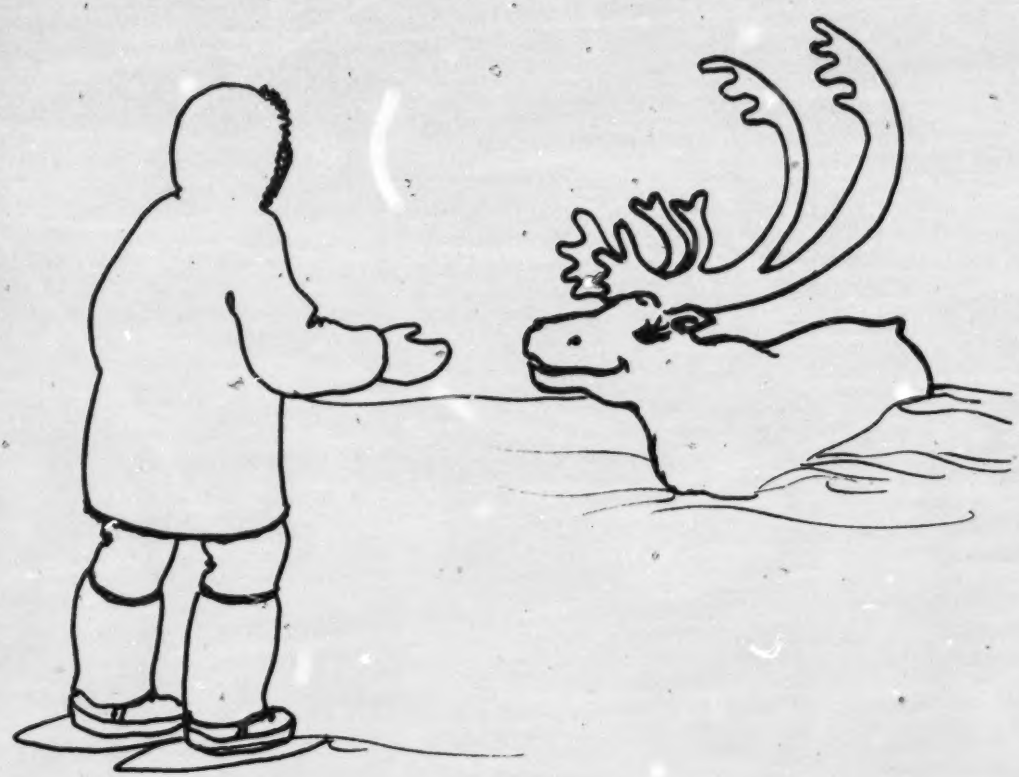


The man in the mountains became a sheep.
He never came down from the mountains.
He is still afraid of Qayaq's wiggling toe.
That is why all the sheep live in the
mountains.

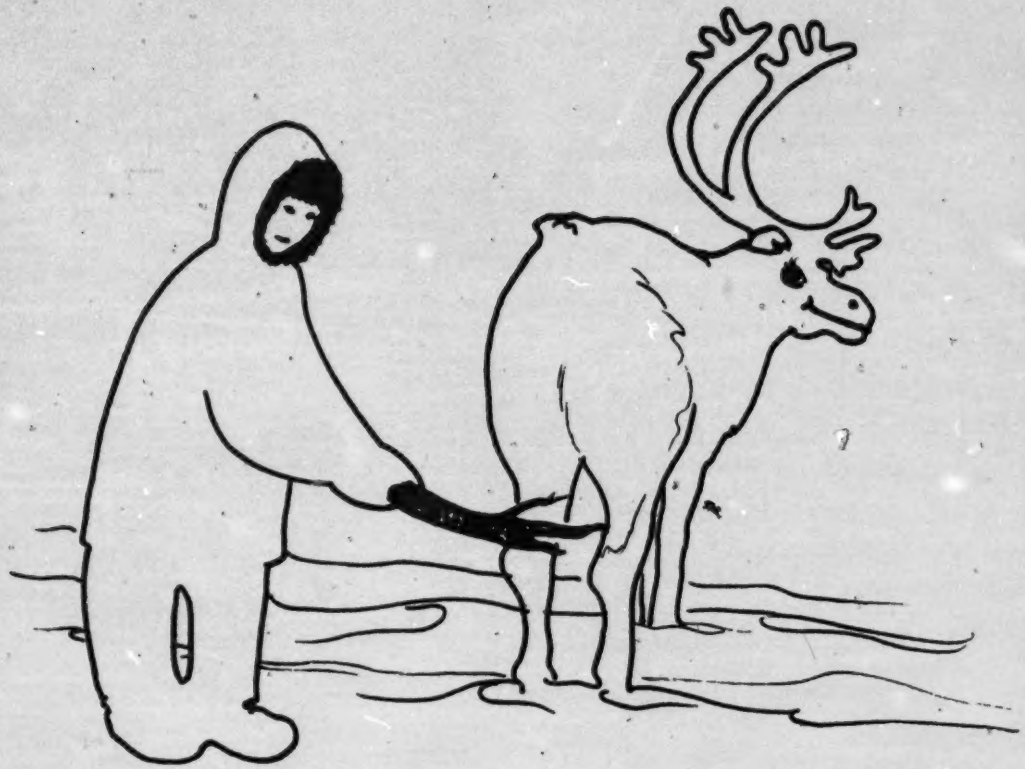
WHY THE CARIBOU HAS LONG LEGS



Qayaq married a caribou.
They traveled around together.
It was hard for the caribou to travel.
She had very short legs.



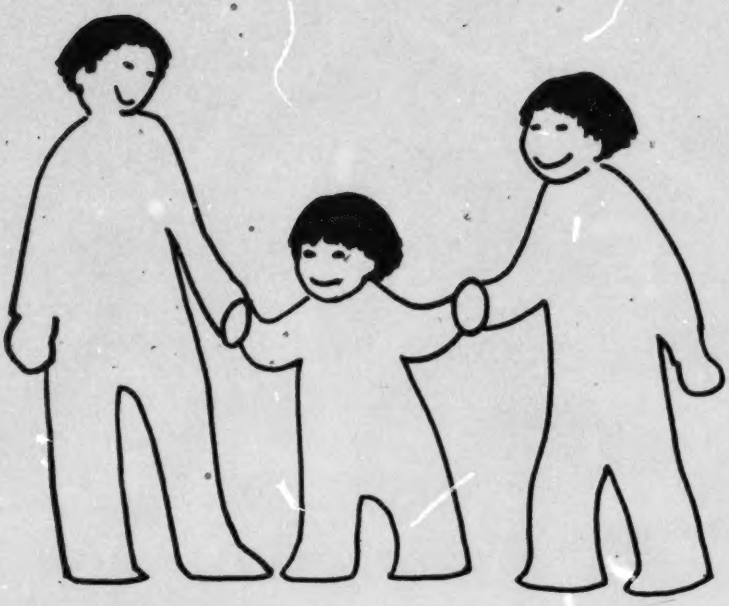
Qayaq and his wife went for a trip.
The snow was deep.
The caribou fell far behind.
Qayaq waited for his wife.
He wanted to help her.



Qayaq found a piece of spruce wood.
He began to hit his wife with the stick.
He hit her on the back legs.
Her legs began to grow.
Soon they were very long.

The caribou could travel much faster
than Qayaq.
Caribou can still travel fast in the snow.
They travel faster than men.
The section of leg below the caribou
knee is called anautaksraq.
That is where Qayaq hit his wife.

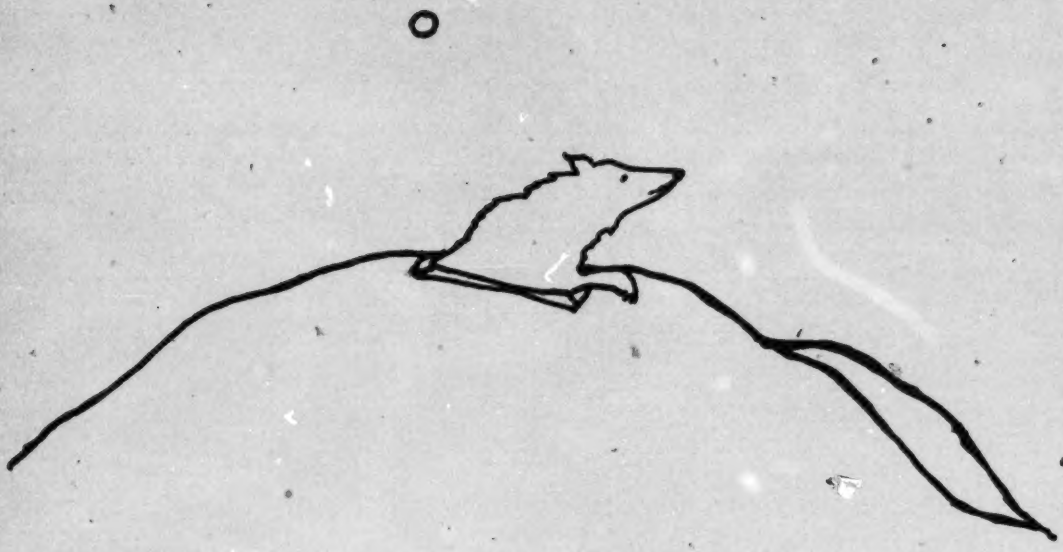
HOW THREE BOYS BECAME ANIMALS



Once there were three young boys.
They were brothers.
They lived with their parents.
They lived in a sod house.

One day, the parents went away.
Before they went, they closed the house.
They closed everything except the smoke hole.
They left the boys inside the house.

Soon, the boys wanted to go outside.
The oldest boy started to walk around.
He started to sing as he walked around.
"I wish I could become something and
go outside."



The oldest boy continued singing.
"I wish I could become something and
go outside.
Maybe I can be a wolf. Woo! Woo!"
And he turned into a wolf and jumped
out through the smoke hole.

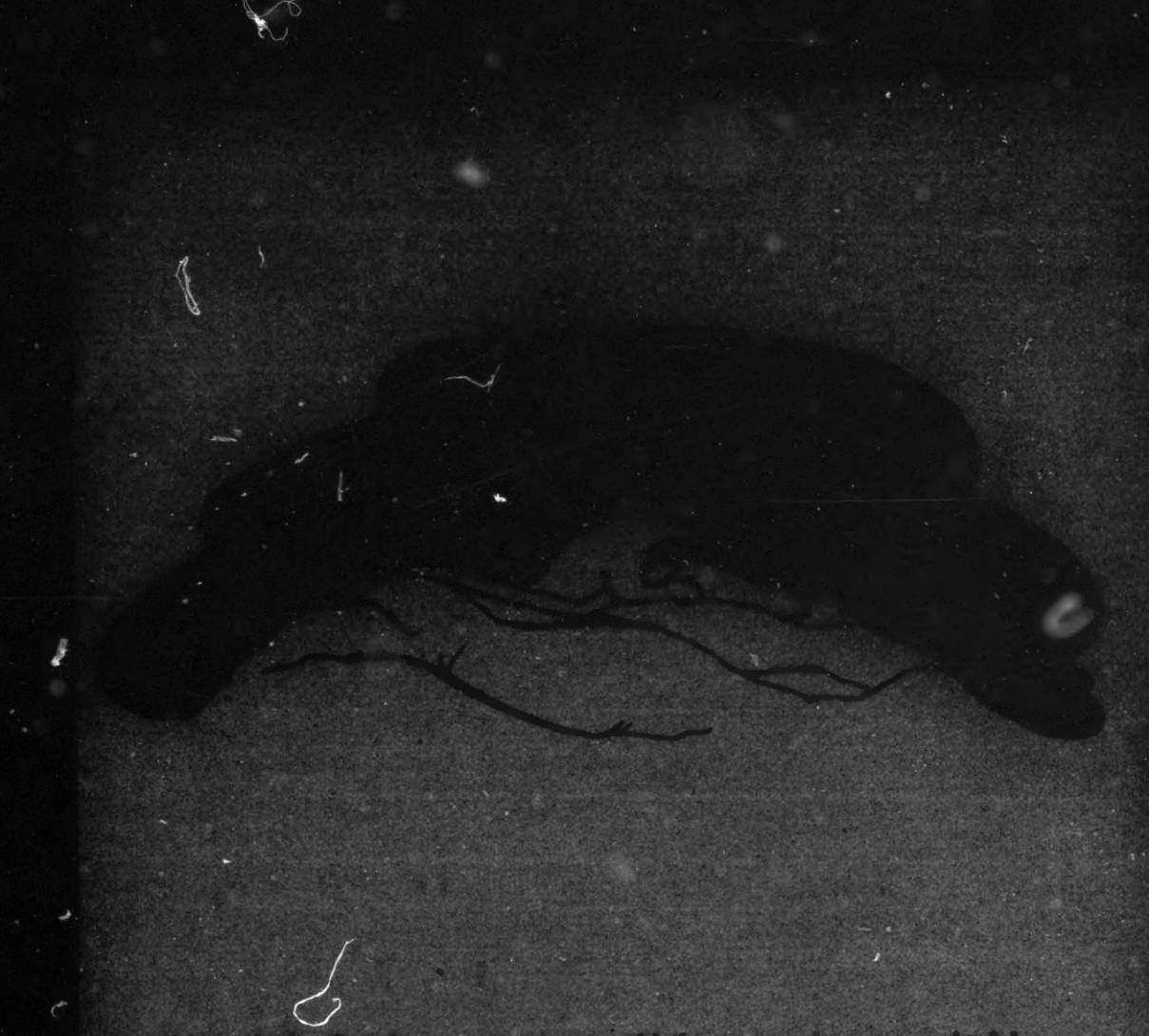
31

The two boys in the house heard the wolf outside.

They wanted to go out too.

The second boy started to walk around.

He started to sing a song.



"I wish to become something and go outside.
I wish to become something and go outside.
Maybe I can be a fox. Vak! Vak!"
And he turned into a fox and jumped out
through the smoke hole.

The youngest boy in the house heard the fox outside.

He wanted to go out too.

He started to walk around.

He started to sing a song.

"I wish to become something and go outside.
I wish to become something and go outside.
Maybe I can be a raven. Qauq! Qauq!"
And he turned into a raven and flew out
through the smoke hole.

35

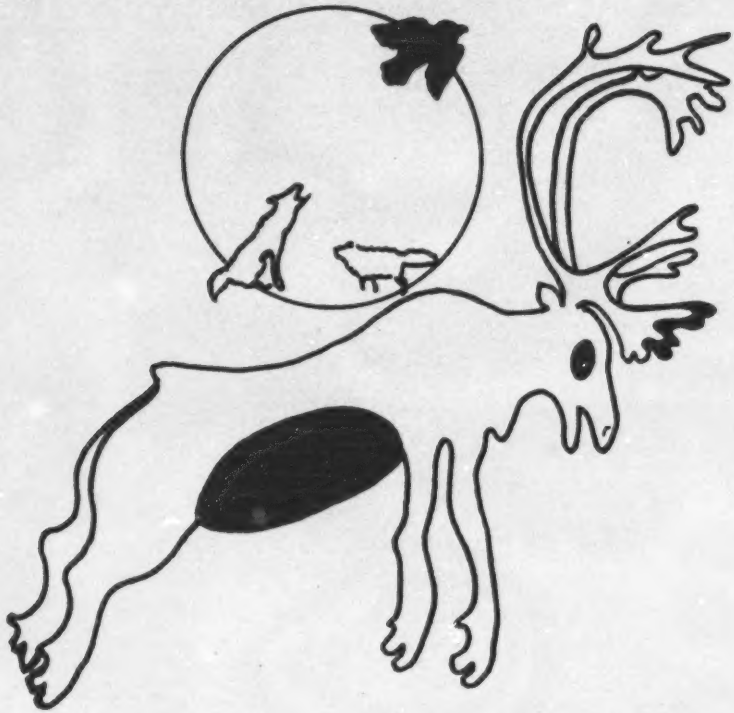
Raven started looking for his brothers.
He found them eating a caribou.
The wolf was eating the tongue.
The fox was eating the inside fat.

...even wanted to eat caribou.

...he looked for his knife but he had forgotten it.

...he hit ...the eyes.

...so the brothers had something to eat.



Now when you find a dead caribou, if it was
killed by a wolf--
it will have no tongue,
it will have no inside fat,
and it will have no eyes,
because the animals have all eaten.